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ABSTRACT

A 1980 study focused on state programs for development of Educational Information Centers (EICs), statewide educational information programs in their second year of federal funding. State coordinators of EIC programs in eighteen states were surveyed in person or by telephone about five areas of EIC effort: collaboration with other state programs, networking local services, information development and dissemination, staff training and development, and research and evaluation. Extensive collaborative efforts were found to abound. Joint planning activity, notably with State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees, dominated, although examples of cooperative funding efforts to avoid duplication were noted. Virtually every state EIC indicated development of a network of local information and counseling services as a program focus. The greatest point of consistency among the EICs was their desire to improve quality and availability of educational information. Nearly every state had or was developing some type of information directory or service--information directories, statewide toll-free telephone service, or computerized career information systems. Training activities for local providers of educational and occupational information and counseling tended to be informational and networking in nature. States were minimizing research and evaluation activities in favor of a focus on development and implementation of services. (YLB)

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A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

STATE EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION PROGRAMS IN MID-STREAM

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

This study is a snapshot at high shutter speed of a rapidly changing scene. The period of the photograph is the beginning of 1980. The subjects are state programs for development of Educational Information Centers.*

In the winter of 1979-80, states were just moving into the second half of their second year of very modest federal funding for statewide educational information programs. They were starting to carry out the designs that had been drawn up during the planning activities the first year of the program. To catch the action for this study, the camera was focused on five areas of EIC effort that loom large in the state plans submitted to the Office of Education:

1. EIC Collaboration with Other State Programs
2. Networking Local Services
3. Information Development and Dissemination
4. Staff Training and Development
5. Research and Evaluation

The authors contacted in person or by telephone the state coordinators of EIC programs in eighteen states. The purpose was twofold: first, to gain insights for planning Denver III, the Third Annual Conference on Statewide Educational and Occupational Information and Counseling in April 1980; second, to provide conference participants through this study with a glimpse at how states are using the EIC program to improve information and counseling for their residents. Neither complete coverage nor scientific sampling was attempted. Rather, an effort was made to query coordinators about the five action areas in states of different size, geography and program emphasis. There are many more states that have nuggets of valuable experience worth revealing. There are many more activities that were not viewed for this study, including how EIC funds are allocated and how states do outreach to promote local EIC services among potential clients. These may deserve to be featured at the Denver IV Conference in the spring of 1981.

This stop-action view of a segment of the EIC scene left the authors struck by three strong impressions which have seeped into the picture as printed. The first is that there is a high level of energy and commitment among EIC coordinators despite funding scarcities and uncertainties. Second, state officials in many agencies have rallied to devise imaginative new ways of sharing resources from diverse programs to serve the public in need of information and counseling. Finally, state EIC coordinators have gone way beyond government to create cooperative linking arrangements with and among a wide spectrum of institutions and community organizations engaged in facilitating choices by learners and workers.

* Federal grants to states to plan, establish and operate Educational Information Centers with advisement, referral and outreach services were authorized by the Education Amendments Act of 1976, Title IV, Section 418.

EIC COLLABORATION WITH OTHER STATE PROGRAMS

In the short history of the EIC program, useful new modes of collaboration seem to have been created in many states. Nearly all states surveyed relate collaboratively with a host of state-level agencies and programs. (See: "Networking" for more information on collaboration with local service providers.) The simplest and most common form of collaboration occurs where a representative array of appropriate agencies and programs serve on the EIC advisory board or steering/planning committees. These bodies vary in responsibility from highly active, quasi-policy bodies (e.g. New York and Pennsylvania) to pro-forma bodies whose individual members nevertheless provide critical review of EIC-produced materials and are solicited for assistance in determining new project directions from time-to-time (e.g. Oregon).

A critical point of collaboration in most states is with the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC). EICs surveyed indicated that they keep good relations with their state's SOICC Director. Many indicated that joint planning occurs and several EICs and SOICCs are jointly implementing services or programs in a variety of interesting ways. The extent to which EICs and SOICCs are cooperating and relating closely is one of the more pleasing occurrences uncovered in the survey. Many had predicted that the ostensible overlap in the missions of the two entities--notably in improving information resources--might find them battling to carve out discrete service territories. Indeed, the reverse seems to be true. In many states, EIC and SOICC directors/coordinators are working out their respective roles and have found productive ways to work together.

Progress in collaborative efforts may result as much from the distinctiveness of their two agencies' missions as from their similarities. EICs, for example, have a broad federal mandate to improve educational information and counseling services within the state. Their mission is strongly consumer-oriented. The SOICC, on the other hand, has the dual role of improving coordination among the providers of occupational planning and management data and helping to improve the use of occupational and other information by consumers, both manpower planners and people planning their own lives. It is in the arena of improving consumer information for the individual making personal decisions--both occupational and educational--that most EICs and SOICCs find good cause for collaboration. This point of mutual concern appears to have bred collaboration, not duplication, which recognizes an essential point: there is little to be gained in providing better occupational information unless information on how to prepare for occupations is improved as well, and unless linkages

are improved with local counseling providers so that the information indeed reaches intended audiences--the consumers themselves. There is enough work to be done in attaining these goals for EICs and SOICCs to develop individual roles without duplication and with numerous points for effective collaboration.

In a number of states joint funding of programs has been negotiated. The Pennsylvania EIC and SOICC, for example, are co-sponsoring a May statewide conference on occupational and educational information sources entitled "The Information Explosion: Strategies for the '80s." It is expected that the conference will be broadly attended by agency and institutional staff who do not normally relate but who find issues shrouding information provision and use as a point of common concern. The Pennsylvania EIC and SOICC are also jointly funding a project at a Pennsylvania college to serve as a collection and dissemination point for resource information on the provision of adult information and counseling services. Counselors will be able to access the service via telephone.

The Oregon EIC and SOICC are collaboratively funding the development of a publication for counselors on sources of occupational and educational information and their use. Under a contract between the Rhode Island EIC and SOICC, the two agencies share the costs of operating the SOICC-run Career Counseling Center which had been in operation for years before SOICC was created. Similarly, both EIC and SOICC funds are helping to pay for the operations in Delaware of the comprehensive statewide information and referral service, INFO, which is supported also by the University of Delaware.

Many EICs are also collaborating with SOICC--and usually others--in the development of computerized career information systems. In many cases, the impetus for system development has been provided by the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee's (NOICC's) Career Information Delivery Systems Grant program (New York, Iowa, South Carolina, California, Delaware and Nebraska, of the states surveyed). In some cases there are formal agreements between the EIC and SOICC that, in effect, combine resources to go with the CIDS grant to support system development and implementation.

The Nebraska EIC, for example, has contracted with the state SOICC to develop forecasts on occupational demand particularized to local areas. The data will feed into the new Nebraska Career Information System which will then provide the new information to students and adults through computer terminals located in schools and agencies. The common concern for improving information provides the fulcrum of collaboration for these programs.

Beyond cooperation with the SOICC, many EICs are collaborating with a variety of other agencies. The Oregon EIC, for example, is acting as the catalyst for development of a Fact Sheet on Adult Learning Opportunities in Oregon. The Fact Sheet will be jointly funded and produced by the EIC, the State System of Higher Education and the State Department of Education. The finished product will be disseminated to local service providers by cooperating partners as well as by other

agencies including the State Scholarship Commission. The Oregon EIC has a contract from State CETA to uncover exemplary linkages between education providers and CETA prime sponsors. A resource guide will be developed and disseminated to educators and ETA staff aimed at fostering improved linkages.

In Connecticut, the Board of Higher Education, with responsibility for the EIC program, has entered into a formal interagency agreement with the State Labor Department and the Employment and Training Division of the State Office of Policy and Management (OPM). The purpose of the agreement is to share resources in the operation of a new Education and Employment Center and the publication of a state directory of public and private counseling agencies. The Center, housed in space contributed by the Commissioner of Labor, has specialized counselors funded by the Labor Department and OPM, using CETA Title II funds. The Center's "Education/Employment Hotline" is operated by the Greater Hartford Consortium for Higher Education under an EIC grant.

The South Carolina SOICC and EIC programs are being operated by a single director. The budgets of these two programs are supplemented by resources from the Employment Security Division, a CIDS grant from NOICC, state CETA money and a National Manpower Institute grant to develop local Work and Education Councils. The combined resources go to the development and implementation of a computerized and microfilm occupational and educational information system. The local Work and Education Councils help to provide a focal point for local networking efforts and help to support system implementation in local agencies and schools.

In New York, the EIC program is working closely with the State Library System to support demonstration projects. The EIC budget, a Kellogg grant and Library Services and Construction Act funds are coordinated to support EIC pilot projects. The EIC coordinator is also requesting state vocational education funds for career counselor positions to augment staffing in the local EICs. (At the same time, the EIC office is using part of its federal grant to help the SOICC select and establish a career information service, under a CIDS grant, with the aim of ensuring that the statewide system is well suited to adult needs.) Lodged in the State Education Department, the EIC Program is in a good position to orchestrate improvement of information and counseling services and to affect the flow of resources from many state and federal programs to them.

In sum, collaborative efforts abound among the EICs surveyed. Joint planning activity, notably with the SOICCs, probably dominates, but there are sufficient examples of cooperative funding efforts to suggest that EIC programs are not duplicating efforts of other related programs but are building on them. The result is a leveraging of available resources, especially federal formula grants, thereby increasing their total impact on information and counseling services.

NETWORKING LOCAL SERVICES

The concept of "networking" appears to have become as common to the EIC vernacular as improving information services. Virtually every State EIC that was surveyed indicated that developing a network of local information and counseling services is a program focus.

The complexion of these networks varies significantly among states. In some states, "networking" refers to a voluntary, loosely organized arrangement between the EIC State office and local services which share the EIC goal of delivering information and counseling to citizens. In these states, there are usually no criteria by which local "affiliates" are assessed for membership by the EIC State office. Rather, "network memberships" may be derived from the local service provider being willing to disseminate information developed by the EIC Program; by attending meetings or conferences convened by the EIC; or by simply being on a mailing list for an EIC newsletter.

In other states, formal criteria have been developed for network affiliation. In some states these have been used to identify existing services as EICs and in others to create EICs.

In the New York EIC grants program, the "request for proposals" contained criteria for selecting organizations as EIC pilot sites which included neutrality, accessibility and outreach to disadvantaged population groups. Six grants of $15,000 to $35,000 were made with emphasis on realizing the state EIC aim of promoting "collaboration and cooperation among existing institutions and agencies providing information and advisory services to encourage maximum use of existing resources, eliminate duplication of efforts, and strengthen the quality of service." The New York longrange plan is to support local EIC's statewide as resources allow.

In Iowa, the EIC program emphasizes regional networking. The entire federal grant for EIC activities has been passed through by state authorities to five Regional Clusters for Lifelong Learning. The Clusters are councils of representatives from area educational institutions and agencies that survey local needs, design services, train staff, funnel information and otherwise support local EICs (in libraries, employment services and cooperative extension offices) for the dissemination of information. The EIC grant enabled Clusters to hire part-time coordinators and publish directories. The State Coordinator of the EIC Program, whose salary is paid from the federal grant for higher education coordination and planning, produces a newsletter for Clusters and local EICs, attends Cluster meetings and convenes statewide gatherings.

In New Mexico, the EIC program holds an annual grant competition for the funding and designating of local EICs that can serve as the hubs of area networks of providers. Grant applicants must agree to be open in the evenings for adult clients and to hold each year at least one regional meeting of people providing educational information for

staff development and network promotion. Grants are awarded to assure geographical balance. Each funded EIC receives a computer terminal to give regional access to the statewide Guidance Information System previously confined to the Albuquerque school system.

The Illinois EIC has given priority to networking by focusing first on identifying 22 local network affiliates in five key population areas, hoping to extend statewide over time and as resources allow. Affiliates become dissemination points for three volume information directories developed by the state-level EIC staff. Training for counseling staff is another service afforded local affiliates. To qualify, local EICs had to meet certain criteria including:

- provide at least 7½ hours per day of telephone assistance to those needing educational and career planning information;
- be staffed with at least one full-time counselor;
- agree to be a dissemination point for college admission and financial aid applications, brochures and the like; and
- help to arrange for periodic workshops on educational and career planning for other providers.

Illinois, then, is one of the few states that has wrestled with the issue of developing standards for selecting local EIC affiliates in an environment where local members do not receive direct state EIC financial subsidy or grants. Washington also publicized selection criteria.

The issue of selection criteria or standards for local affiliates is one that many states have been able to skirt in the early days of the EIC Program. With limited resources, most EICs have been willing to work with nearly any local service providing information and counseling. However, if EIC allocations in the future increase or funding collaborations allow not only designating local EICs but also channeling money to local affiliates, the issue of network standards will emerge as pressing.

At the beginning of 1980, local network affiliates serve largely as dissemination points for EIC-developed information resources and as recipients of staff training activities or other endeavors bent upon improving their service capabilities. While these early, informal networking efforts are useful first steps, much remains to be done before demonstrably identifiable "EICs" are spread across the states. What is needed is more experimentation with the development of EIC selection criteria to model how services and money can flow from the State to those selected as network members.

INFORMATION DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The greatest point of consistency among the EICs surveyed is their common desire to improve the quality and availability of educational information. Nearly every state surveyed has or is developing some type of information directory or service. These are designed for strengthening the intermediaries providing information to the public or for direct public consumption or both. The mode of delivery is determined by the audience as well as the content.

Information directories are the most common information format. Directories tend to be of two types: 1) those that include information about postsecondary institutions and programs and are intended to be used as guidebooks mainly by local information and counseling services and sometimes also by their clients (e.g. Illinois, Pennsylvania and Nebraska), and 2) those that list and describe local information and counseling service agencies (e.g. Indiana, California and Connecticut). The level of specificity of the information developed and provided in both types of directories varies significantly among EIC programs. Some institutional directories, for example, are intended to be first-stage resources for counselors and/or clients. They have basic information about institutions (e.g., type of institution, address, contact person, etc.). They sometimes include a matrix showing the programs offered by each institution. Others are very comprehensive, "one-stop shopping" guidebooks, primarily for counselors, with many facts on admissions regulations and financial aid as well as programs.

A second popular way of improving information delivery is by means of a statewide, toll-free telephone service often referred to as a "hotline". These services give members of the public information on educational resources in their area, explain financial aid programs, and refer them to local counseling services for help in their personal planning. According to a USOE review of EIC State Plans, some twenty states have established "hotlines" or intend to do so. They are considered particularly valuable in extending information services to rural populations who are difficult to reach through local centers. Financial constraints on the expansion of local advisement centers may prompt EIC coordinators to study experience in providing by telephone both career and educational counseling, as well as information, in which Rhode Island has been a pioneer since the early 1970's.

Computerized career information system (CIS) development or enhancement dominates EIC information activities in a significant number of states. Half the states have systems in operation or in the planning stage. At the end of 1979, fifteen of these states received grants from the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee to develop or improve statewide Career Information Delivery Systems (CIDS). These systems include information on training and educational resources available throughout the state to prepare for each occupation listed. They have been used mainly in schools and adults have not generally had easy access to them.

In some states, EIC funds are being used to collect and process for computerized systems information of particular value to adult learners including local continuing higher education and non-credit courses (e.g. Iowa and Delaware). In other states, EIC is contributing to system design or redesign to ensure its value for adult users (e.g. New York and Oregon). A few EIC programs are enabling local advisement centers to make use of existing computerized information by providing terminals, microfiche or hard copy (e.g. New Mexico and Washington).

A review of eighteen states shows how EIC funds and leadership are devoted to improving information services to learners and would-be learners.

California is developing a directory of community-based information and counseling services. The directory will identify services by county and by target populations.

Connecticut provides information and referrals through a toll-free telephone line operated by the staff of the Greater Hartford Consortium for Higher Education under a grant from the EIC program. The service is promoted by a postcard distributed to libraries, adult education programs and community organizations throughout Connecticut. A directory of all public and private counseling agencies is also planned.

Delaware has a single statewide EIC, INFO, which is funded also by SOICC to computerize its educational files for future use in a statewide CIDS.

Illinois has set up and operates a toll-free, telephone hotline service that dispenses postsecondary educational information to callers. Looseleaf directories of information on postsecondary educational opportunities have been developed. They serve as the data base for the telephone system, help local EIC affiliates and show up at college fairs and in high school and college visitations. Efforts are also being undertaken to put the EIC data bank into a microfiche system which would then be available broadly throughout Illinois.

Iowa is providing support in the further development of the Career Information System of Iowa (CISI) which is also supported by the SOICC's receipt of a CIDS grant. The EIC will collect information on adult continuing education and non-credit courses for inclusion in CISI. This information is currently collected and maintained in manual form through the regional EICs.

Maryland has a written agreement with the SOICC to collaborate in the funding and implementation of a career information delivery system which is also supported by a CIDS grant.

Minnesota has developed cooperatively with the Minnesota Occupational Information System (MOIS) a two volume guidebook on all postsecondary institutions and programs in the state. The developmental

work on the guidebooks has been performed by MOIS and the EIC has paid for publication. A directory of educational brokering and information providers operating in Minnesota will also be published. The EIC, which operates within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, is exploring development of self-regulatory policies for institutional recruitment activities. These policies would, in effect, impose some standards on institutional information and recruiting practices, thereby protecting the public interest.

Missouri is making plans for the development of three directories--one each on two and four institutions, proprietary schools and trade schools. The directories would include institutional descriptions, matrices of program availability by institution and financial aid information, a glossary of terms, and a bibliography of other resources.

Montana has embarked upon implementation of a computerized career information system with the EIC the focal point of development. Montana postsecondary educational information has been developed and is in the process of being computerized for pilot test purposes. The EIC staff will next turn its attention to developing occupational information most probably in cooperation with the State's Employment Service.

Nebraska has published an institutional directory, keying on providing information on institutional contact people for financial aid, admissions, etc. The EIC has contracted with the Nebraska CIS to operate a telephone hotline, the data base for which will be the computerized CIS system. In addition, a resource directory of local services and programs crucial to supporting individuals' access to postsecondary education will be published (e.g., childcare, counseling service and financial aid availability).

New Jersey has created the Statewide Information Network for Education (SIGN) with a hotline and a register of adult education opportunities which is operated with state EIC and HEA Title I funds by Thomas Edison College. In 1979, over 9,000 people called, 65 per cent over 25 years of age. Of these callers, 31 per cent contacted the institutions and programs to which they were referred; 13 per cent enrolled. Information available includes not only postsecondary opportunities but support services and financial aid.

New Mexico aims to extend the Guidance Information System (GIS) into a statewide computerized system. The five regional EIC sites each have terminals to access GIS currently, including localized files for New Mexico. The EIC also is operating a telephone hotline, funded by SOICC, and hopes to publish a comprehensive directory of postsecondary educational information.

New York is collaborating with the SOICC in implementing a CIDS grant. An EIC grant has been provided to the New York City METROLAB to improve the educational component of its career information system. An

annotated bibliography of career resources has been published and disseminated broadly. The EIC is developing a directory of over 1,000 information and counseling providers in New York which will be used to strengthen the referral capability of local providers. Finally, a major project is to study alternative computerized delivery systems and select one that, appropriately modified, will become a statewide adult information system.

Oregon is developing an occupational and educational information bibliography. A "How To" Guide on developing local referral networks will be published and used in improving referral skills of local service providers. The EIC Project is also producing a Fact Sheet on Adult Learning Opportunities in Oregon that will be broadly disseminated. In addition, the EIC has contracted with the Oregon CIS to make modifications in its system to make it more relevant to adults-in-transition.

Pennsylvania has developed a guidebook on postsecondary institutions and their program offerings that will be disseminated to local counseling agencies. In addition, the directory will serve as the data base for a telephone hotline to be pilot-tested in one region of the state.

South Carolina has placed major emphasis on further developing and implementing a computerized occupational and educational information system, using EIC, SOICC, CIDS, CETA and other monies. An unusual feature of the South Carolina system is that it provides specific information on daily job openings as collected by the South Carolina Employment Service.

Washington has supported improvement in the information files of the Washington Occupational Information Service (WOIS). Educational information that is particulary useful to adults-in-transition will be added to WOIS. Local services selected as EIC "network" members which are not currently using WOIS, have been provided with copies of the WOIS files in hard-copy form.

Wyoming is implementing a computerized career information system with EIC resources leading the way. Several pilot sites are currently operating, postsecondary educational information has been localized, and the staff are currently working on localizing occupational information. The EIC expects to implement the developed system statewide.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Nearly every EIC surveyed reported that they are conducting some form of training for local providers of educational and occupational information and counseling. Training activities tend to be informational and networking in nature. Full-blown training programs aimed at increasing the skills of counselors are still rare. The usual format is a series of regional meetings with service providers aimed at exchanging experiences, dispensing materials, discussing service issues, promoting closer relationships among providers and, generally, stimulating a spirit of community.

Several EICs, however, are launching structured skill training programs for local services. In several cases they have designed training on the basis of surveys of training needs.

The New York EIC, for example, has contracted with the Regional Learning Service of Syracuse, an independent brokering service, to provide in-depth skill training for advisors operating in the six EIC pilot sites receiving grants from the EIC program. Two and one-half day training sessions will be provided for the pilot site staffs who responded in advance to questionnaires on their objectives for training. The content focuses on financial aid for adults, interviewing and communicating skills, outreach and promotion techniques, career counseling tools and tests, advisement by telephone and work with advisory boards.

The Oregon EIC is training as educational brokers one rural continuing education coordinator and one representative of a social service agency from each of nine communities in a large sparsely populated rural area. The competency-based training aims to develop referral and advocacy skills so that participants can be intermediaries between isolated learners and three postsecondary institutions and school systems. Another program will train workers in food processing plants of Eastern Oregon to function as learning organizers for fellow workers. In addition, four regional two-day workshops will be convened to improve the referral skills of local service providers and to assist them in developing local referral networks and a consolidated referral directory.

The Washington EIC is training the staff of over 20 designated EIC's in all phases of service provision, including identifying additional funding sources. The training gives attention to improving the way local EICs relate to other service agencies and to the use of computerized information in the Washington Occupational Information System.

The Illinois EIC conducts training for the counseling staffs of

22 agencies and organizations selected as affiliates of the EIC network. The training aims to develop the competencies that counseling staffs reported, on an inventory, that they needed to improve (e.g. competencies in (1) making referrals, (2) counseling, (3) assessment, (4) outreach, (5) advocacy and (6) center management).

Among EICs implementing--or involved in implementing--a career information system, training of local system users is occurring, as well. This training ranges from basic training on how to use the system, to teaching counselors and other staff how to integrate the system into client assessment activities, to using the system as part of the agency's outreach program.

In sum, all surveyed EICs are creating some forums for improving the service capabilities of local practitioners. While all EIC coordinators cite the need for training, limited resources and uncertainty about the counseling constituency inhibit the extent to which training efforts thus far have been well-planned, structured skill development endeavors. As "quality control" in EIC networks emerges as an issue in the EIC community, greater skill training efforts can be expected.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Most State EICs performed some type of surveying or assessment in their first program year to ascertain the scope and availability of existing EIC-like services. A smaller number studied the service needs of particular target populations (e.g. Indiana). The second year of the EIC Program finds most states minimizing research and evaluation activities and focusing on the development and implementation of services. There are exceptions, however, which are noteworthy.

The New York EIC is using a task force of 30 adult counseling practitioners as well as outside consultants to evaluate the relevance of four existing computerized information systems for adults-in-transition. The task force is also developing the components of a model information system for adults. The model will serve as one of the bases upon which the four systems will be evaluated. The ultimate result will be that one of the evaluated systems will be recommended for adoption in New York and the outcomes of the task force's work will provide an agenda for system improvements and new component development to improve its value for adult users.

The Oregon EIC is developing a bibliography of published sources of occupational, educational, financial aid, career planning and job seeking information. Sources will be ranked according to usefulness in serving adults and will be fully annotated. A survey of adult counseling practitioners from around the country will provide the data base for the ranking of the sources.

The Pennsylvania EIC has contracted to have a study done on the organizational features and characteristics of local EIC-like agencies to determine which features are held in common and which are ideosyncratic responses to local conditions. The study will yield the common organizational attributes of EIC-like agencies and will provide a base-line for assessing the most cost-effective and feasible means of providing particular EIC services.

The Washington Council on Postsecondary Education is assessing the operation of the first year efforts to establish an EIC network. The evaluation focuses on the problems encountered in delivering EIC services, ways to improve services, and priorities for future EIC efforts.

In California an evaluation was made of two Community Advisory Centers which were funded by the state, from Continuing Education funds (Title I, HEA), as pilot EIC centers. Evaluators were particularly concerned with such issues as breadth of services, impartiality and comprehensiveness of information and referrals, and institutionalization of the programs. Each was sponsored by consortia of institutions and attention was paid to advantages in referrals that might be enjoyed by the individual institutions that received the state grants.

The foregoing embody the most concrete and articulated research and evaluation efforts conducted by the states surveyed. Nearly all states, however, are at least informally evaluating the impact of services they are extending, new products they have developed and the efficacy of information services or systems they are developing or whose implementation they are abetting. In Illinois, for example, a condition for selection as an EIC is that the local agency or organization provide evaluations of the training, information and other services provided to them by the State EIC office. Most of the toll-free telephone services collect data on their users as they call, and some, such as New Jersey, follow up with clients to learn of how the information was used.

It is not surprising that evaluation and research efforts are limited given the short history of the EIC Program. The demands of accountability at the state and federal levels are bound to swell as states increase their EIC support, in cash and in kind, to local information and counseling sites or affiliates of the EIC network. In the future, then, the EIC community will have to increase its research and evaluation activities if it is demonstrably to improve services to clients, and if it hopes to build a public constituency and legislative support.

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